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ABSTRACT

In June 1988, 28 principals and assistant principals from public and private schools throughout New Mexico gathered for the first Summer Institute, sponsored by the New Mexico Principals' Center. The goals of the meeting were to share professional knowledge, to engage in "reflective practice," and to construct personal and professional statewide networks. A participant-staff roster is provided, followed by a preliminary typology of administrative "problems" in schools. Included is the banquet address by James P. Miller, Sr., in which he emphasizes the need for management quality in the schools and school districts. Next, a paper by Bruce Barnett, institute consultant, presents the logic of the conceptual framework for the case records that follow. The paper is entitled: "Reflection: The Cornerstone of Learning from Experience," and dwells on a model for reflective thought emphasizing that reflection stimulates action. Twenty-three cases are recorded. (SI)

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NEW MEXICO CASE RECORDS

IN

SCHOOL ADMINISTRATION

VOLUME A

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NEW MEXICO CASE RECORDS
IN
SCHOOL ADMINISTRATION
VOLUME A

EDITED BY
PAUL A. POHLAND, COORDINATOR
THE NEW MEXICO PRINCIPALS' CENTER

FEBRUARY, 1989

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	PAGE
The New Mexico Principals' Center	i
Forward	ii-iii
1988 Summer Institute Participant-Staff Roster	1-3
Preliminary Typology of Administrative "Problems" in Schools	4
Banquet Address (Dr. J.P. Miller, Sr.)	5-8
Reflection: The Cornerstone of Learning from Experience (Dr. Bruce Barnett)	9-17

CASE RECORDS

#	CODE	TITLE	PAGE
A1	1.4.0	Communicating with the Central Office	18
A2	3.3.1	School Business Partnerships	19
A3	3.4.0	Communicating with Parents	20
A4	4.1.0	Computer Purchase	21
A5	5.1.0	Developing Administrator Credibility	22
A6	6.3.0	Supervising Non-Certified Staff	23-24
A7	7.1.0	Enhancing Staff Collegiality	25
A8	7.1.0	Staff Interaction Meetings	26-27
A9	7.1.0	Enhancing Staff Collegiality	28
A10	7.2.0	Organizing a Student Council	29
A11	7.2.0	Staff Participation in Grouping Students (Sp. Ed.)	30-31
A12	7.3.1	Selecting School Colors and Logo	32
A13	8.1.1	Student Placement	33-34
A14	8.3.2	Changing Student Attitudes	35
A15	9.3.0	Teacher Inter-visitation	36-37
A16	9.6.0	Teacher In-service	38
A17	9.6.0	Teacher In-service	39
A18	9.6.1	Teacher Plateauing	40-41
A19	9.7.0	Teacher Plateauing	42
A20	9.7.0	Teacher Supervision	43
A21	9.7.0	Teacher Supervision	44
A22	10.0.0	Adding Curricular Spice	45
A23	10.0.0	Renaming a Special Education Program	46

THE NEW MEXICO PRINCIPALS' CENTER

The New Mexico Principals' Center is:

- an alternative mechanism for professional growth and development
- an instrument for building personal and professional networks
- practitioners at work reflecting, sharing, acting, teaching and learning
- the embodiment of a belief in the efficacy of principals in crafting effective schools
- a voluntary association of principals
- a repository of enormous but largely untapped professional knowledge
- a mechanism for reducing the loneliness and sense of isolation felt by many in the principalship
- a dream
- an ideal
- and much more

FORWARD

From June 13 to June 17, 1988, twenty-eight principals and assistant principals from public and private schools throughout the state of New Mexico gathered in Albuquerque for the first residential Summer Institute sponsored by the New Mexico Principals' Center. For organizers and participants alike the Institute was a venture of faith: In conception and design the Institute ran counter to much of the conventional wisdom regarding administrator inservice programs. Among other things it demanded that participants set aside a week immediately following the close of school and engage in a set of esoteric and unfamiliar activities at substantial personal cost. Who would bet on that?

Yet by all accounts the Institute was a resounding success. The goals of the Institute--to share professional knowledge, to be initiated into the mysteries of "reflective practice", and to construct personal and professional state-wide networks--were achieved well beyond anyone's expectations.

This volume of case records, the first we hope of many, bears witness to achievement of the second Institute goal, becoming "reflective practitioners". It is a visible product of the Institute and the November follow-up meeting, and a reflection of the process of becoming reflective. Producing case records was a daily feature of the Institute and the records in turn became a means of sharing craft knowledge with peers.

The rationale for developing a body of case records is fairly straight-forward. Initially it is derived from disenchantment with the body of knowledge about administration generated via social science research over the past thirty-five years. The reasons for the disenchantment are numerous and do not require repeating here. The critical point is that craft knowledge derived from practitioner experience has recently been accorded legitimacy and, in many if not all circles, is perceived as speaking with unusual eloquence to the problems of practice.

An equally compelling reason for advocating the generation of a "practice knowledge base" has been advanced by the late Paula Silver who wrote:

> Principals who write these records develop a new and more sophisticated concept of their role in schools. No longer simply bureaucratic functionaries or mere building managers, these

> principals become reflective, analytic, professionally responsible educational leaders whose insights deepen with each record written. These educators take on the task of designing inventive solutions to problems, and they share their thinking so that they and their colleagues can grow (p.1).

In brief, writing case records is both a personal growth process and a means of communication.

Like the 100 case records in the Silver volume those included here are imperfect. They reflect in varying degrees the struggles to communicate formally and publicly that which is essentially tacit and private. Such an undertaking is not easy, nor is risk free. Some cases lie at the quick of administrative life.

The organization of this volume is fairly simple. The corpus of case records is preceded by the address presented by Dr. James P. Miller, Sr. at the banquet which opened the Institute. His message is timeless.

Second, we present an original paper by Dr. Bruce Barnett, Institute Consultant, entitled "Reflection: The Cornerstone of Learning from Experience". Dr. Barnett's paper should be read prior to the case records as it presents the logic of and conceptual framework for the case records which follow.

The order of case record presentation has been guided by Silver's "Preliminary Typology of Administrative 'Problems' in Schools". The typology, too, is admittedly imperfect and we have made some modifications. Nonetheless we have used it and acknowledge our debt to **APEX** as we present our collection of case records as a gift to the profession.

Paul Pohland, Editor

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PRINCIPALS' CENTER
SUMMER INSTITUTE
JUNE 13-17, 1988

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PRELIMINARY TYPOLOGY OF ADMINISTRATIVE "PROBLEMS" IN SCHOOLS

1.0.0--CENTRAL OFFICE STAFF REL'S
- 1.1.0 Superordinate Relations
- 1.2.0 District policies
- 1.3.0 Dist. Resource Alloca's
- 1.4.0 Cent. Office Personnel

2.0.0--CERTIFIED NONTEACHING STAFF
- 2.1.0 Quality of Performance
- 2.2.0 Compliance
- 2.3.0 Cooperation
- 2.4.0 Accidents/Injuries
- 2.5.0 Other

3.0.0--COMMUNITY MEMBER RELATIONS
- 3.1.0 Parent Complaints
  - 3.1.1 re Tchr. Performance
  - 3.1.2 re Schl. Policies/Prac's
  - 3.1.3 re Other
- 3.2.0 Parent Voluntarism
  - 3.2.1 Inadeq. Participation
  - 3.2.2 Excessive Participation
- 3.3.0 Comm'ty Members/Agencies
  - 3.3.1 School-Community Partnerships**
  - 3.4.0 Communicating with parents**

4.0.0--FACILITIES, EQUIPMENT OR SUPPLIES
- 4.1.0 Computers**

5.0.0--MISCELLANEOUS
- 5.1.0 Administrator Behavior**

6.0.0--NONCERTIFIED STAFF
- 6.1.0 Performance
- 6.2.0 Compliance
- 6.3.0 Cooperation
- 6.4.0 Accidents/Injuries
- 6.5.0 Other

7.0.0--SCHOOL CONDITIONS OR CHARACTERISTICS
- 7.1.0 Staff Morale/Motivation
- 7.2.0 School Policies/Practices
- 7.3.0 Other General Conditions
- 7.3.1 School Culture**

8.0.0--STUDENTS
- 8.1.0 Performance (Learning)
  - 8.1.1 Cognitive, Individuals
  - 8.1.2 Cognitive, Groups
  - 8.1.3 Affective, Individuals
  - 8.1.4 Affective, Groups
- 8.2.0 Compliance (Discipline)
  - 8.2.1 Behavior, Individuals
  - 8.2.2 Behavior, Groups
- 8.3.0 Cooperation (Attitudes)
  - 8.3.1 Motivation
  - 8.3.2 Values
- 8.4.0 Accidents/Injuries
- 8.5.0 Other

9.0.0--TEACHERS
- 9.1.0 Performance (Competence)
  - 9.1.1 Instruction, Individuals
  - 9.1.2 Instruction, Groups
  - 9.1.3 Mgmt., Individuals
  - 9.1.4 Mgmt., Groups
- 9.2.0 Compliance
  - 9.2.1 Conformity, rules/regs
  - 9.2.2 Conformity, norms
- 9.3.0 Cooperation
- 9.4.0 Accidents/Injuries
- 9.5.0 Other
- 9.6.0 Teacher Development**
  - 9.6.1 Plateauing**
- 9.7.0 Supervision**
- 10.0.0 Curriculum**

* From: Silver, P., Walker, A., White, C.,& Barry, P. (Eds.). (1986). School Administration: 100 Cases. Champaign, Ill.: APEX Center, Inc., p.7.

** Additions to Silver Typology.

UNM PRINCIPALS' CENTER INSTITUTE
Banquet Address, June 12, 1988
Dr. James P. Miller, Sr.

I am most particularly glad that the Principals' Center has been established and that this Institute is being held. If there is anything I'm convinced of, both from my reading of the literature and from my many years in the business, it is that the quality of management--of administration, if you will--is utterly central to the quality of schools and school districts. Many other variables play a part--yes, including money and we need more of that--but nothing can help or hurt in any given situation as much as the day-after-day.

Notice that I said "help or hurt." I suspect that some of us, at least, are in administration because we have observed or worked under principals who could not create or maintain the atmosphere needed to run a decent, let alone a quality, school. They were the sort who engaged in management practices which were indeed destructive of the function of the school, practices which so poisoned the atmosphere that employee energies were focused away from effective performance.

You will be told more than once this week, I'm sure, just how important you are in your role. I only ask that you remember the flip side of that implied compliment. No one can do more to ruin a school than a principal.

Perhaps that statement can be the basis upon which you become a "reflective practitioner." For surely you do not want to be a destructive force, but rather a constructive one. But that wanting, if not acted upon with mature reflection followed by specific planning and goal-setting, could end up being only another fruitless, if not harmful, ego trip. Good intentions, in short, are an absolutely necessary but utterly insufficient pre-condition for the creation and maintenance of an excellent school.

Think of the contrast--a principal can ruin a school over time, frustrate its purposes, drain away the zeal and energies of its staff, or--and here's the wonderful possibility--a principal can lift it up, bring together its students, teachers and parents so that it becomes a place respected, even loved, because of its humanity and high quality.

That is the glorious potential of school administration, and if you want it to be yours, you will find its beginnings in study and reflection.

In study first, because a good deal is known about what separates great schools--truly excellent schools--from the rest, and because you and your colleagues possess a considerable body of hard-earned knowledge of what works and what doesn't work, knowledge to be shared this week.

But then, after study, comes the crucial time for thought, for reflection, for developing a private agenda and new purposes. With reflection, you can lead your school community to the development of visions and goals, the dreams which are necessary for men and women to commit themselves fully to any task.

We know that you cannot achieve excellence only at the top or impose it on those who work in your school. But if you ask that visions be created and goals set, if you insist upon behaviors which are consistent with those visions and goals, if you confront directly the difficult problems and make the hard decisions, you've got a chance for excellence at your school.

Think of what a school can be:

> A place where there is an excellent or at least improving teacher in every classroom because faculty improvement is a constant and shared goal.
>
> A place marked by order and discipline and caring, where there is mutual respect among and between administrators, teachers and students, these providing the foundation for student improvement and excellence.

With these or other ideas in place, you and your colleagues can set priorities for work and targets for accomplishment. Then and only then can you say to yourselves, to your students and their families, to your community--here, clearly and plainly is what this school stands for, here is what we expect, and here is what we pledge and promise. A great school asks much, but it also promises much.

For those who think I'm dwelling too much on visions and goals, let me remind you of the immortal words of the great American philosopher Mae West. "Too much of a good thing is simply wonderful." You will need to remind your school community from time to time of the high purposes to which you subscribe. My re-emphasis is a form of modeling for you. Those of us who are farm boys know that a cow doesn't stay milked after one milking.

But wait, you may be saying, what I need is not pie-in-the-sky, but practical ideas on how to handle specific problems. And I would not disagree. Solid practical information and a repertoire of tested techniques are useful in every profession. These are things you will be sharing with one another this week.

But another highly practical thing in this world is the creating of visions and the setting of goals. In the Bible it is written, "Without a vision, the people will perish." Without visions to pursue, your school may be a rudderless ship beset by endless cross-currents; with them, problems diminish in number and magnitude, and even the most serious can be considered and faced within a framework that offers guidance and consistency.

I'm not talking pie-in-the-sky or impractical theory. Here and there, now and then, men and women have become reflective practitioners, students of their profession, creators of visions to the immense benefit of their schools. It's not that action guided by study and reflection has been tried and found useless; it's that the task has been found demanding and not tried.

Erasmus said "in great things, it is enough to have tried." What is a greater thing in our time than school leadership? The lives of children, the dreams of families, the quality of life, and the future of our nation are all at stake in the work of the schools. It would indeed be enough to have tried to make your school better. But the news is happier than that. Thoughtful, purposeful leadership by you arising from your study and reflection cannot help but make your school better, a blessing upon this land and among our peoples.

Will you do it?

The Apostle James once wrote:

> Be ye doers of the Word
> And not hearers only.
> For he who is a hearer
> And not a doer of the Word
> Is like a man who rises in the morning
> And looks at his natural face in a mirror
> And straightway goes forth
> And forgets what manner of man he is.
>
> But he who is a doer
> And not a forgetful hearer of the Word
> Shall be blessed in this way.

And so you shall. By being here you have taken the first step, made the first commitment toward greatness for your school.

I'm honored to have been your guest. Good luck to you all.

Reflection: The Cornerstone of Learning from Experience

Dr. Bruce Barnett

A major premise of this institute is that elementary and secondary school principals and vice-principals can benefit by becoming more reflective about their practices as administrators. Therefore, many of the institute's activities are aimed at helping participants relive past experiences, understanding why certain actions may have occurred and how these actions might be continued or altered in the future.

Given this premise, it is important for admininstrators to understand what reflection is and its value for them as practicing professionals. Reflection can be defined as a process of bringing past events to a conscious level and of determining appropriate ways to think and behave in the future. Humans possess this unique ability to bring previous situations to a conscious level, to make sense of them, and to decide how to act on these insights. People do this all the time; however, they may not be aware of the exact process they have incorporated.

If reflection is something we do consciously or unconsciously, of what value is it to us? Donald Schön (1983) has discovered that many professionals use reflection to deal with the complexities, uncertainties, and value conflicts inherent in their jobs. Through reflection, using what he refers to as an "internal dialogue with one's self," people use experience, intuition, and trial and error thinking to define and solve a particular problem or dilemma they may be facing. Reflection can focus on a variety of issues, including the tacit norms underlying a judgment, the strategies behind an action, the feelings associated with an event, or the role a person is trying to fulfill.

Although Schön (1983) contends that people in many professional fields actively practice the art of reflection, some scholars have argued that because of the nature of their jobs it is difficult for school administrators to learn from their experiences (Peterson, 1985). Principals' jobs are characterized by brief interactions, a variety of demands and expectations, and constant interruptions. These factors create obstacles for principals as they attempt to use their experiences to process information and make rapid-fire decisions.

These constraints raise a key question or challenge for principals. Can the reflective process realistically be used to help them in dealing with the uncertainties and ambiguities of their profession? One important consideration in answering this question is to distinguish between "reflection on action" and "reflection in action" (Schön, 1983). Reflection on action is what people do as they review past actions after they have occurred. This review allows them to consider if these behaviors were appropriate and/or if their future actions might need to be revised in light of any new information or insights they may have gained. In this sense, past actions are examined for confirmation, validation, or redirection. In contrast, reflection in action refers to the active process of reflecting on behaviors as they are occurring or during "the zone of time in which action can still make a difference to the situation" (Schön, 1983, p. 61). Used in this manner, the reflective process is applied on-the-spot rather than after-the-fact.

Reflection in action is the process Peterson (1985) believes principals have a difficult trying to incorporate. Nevertheless, it has been discovered that when principals have the opportunity to practice strategies for reflecting on their actions by being observed and

interviewed by a peer partner, they have a tendency to become more introspective about their subsequent actions as they are taking place (Barnett, 1987). This suggests that by practicing reflection on action in a safe environment that school administrators are capable of transferring this process to their daily lives as principals (i.e., reflection in action). A key ingredient to this transfer, however, is a process or strategy that principals can use to increase their ability to reflect on their thoughts and actions.

A Model for Reflective Thought and Action

In order for principals in this institute to practice reflection on action, they are introduced to a format for helping them to process past experiences, to make sense of them, and to determine different ways of responding in the future. The format, or model, used during the institute incorporates some of the key elements featured in experiential learning theory (Kolb, 1984). This theory espouses that four interrelated phases--concrete experience, reflective observation, abstract conceptualization, and active experimentation--are required for people to learn from their experiences. Reflection, as it appears in the second phase, is a critical component of this theory because through reflective observation people are able to reconstruct past experiences, asking themselves questions that clarify the intentions of their actions and possible consequences. Without the information that surfaces through the reflective process, people will find it difficult to make informed decisions about how to alter their subsequent actions.

For purposes of the institute, an additional phase--planning for implementation--is added to assist participants in considering what new

actions might be required before they are actually enter the active experiementation phase. Each of these phases is briefly described below and appear in Figure 1.

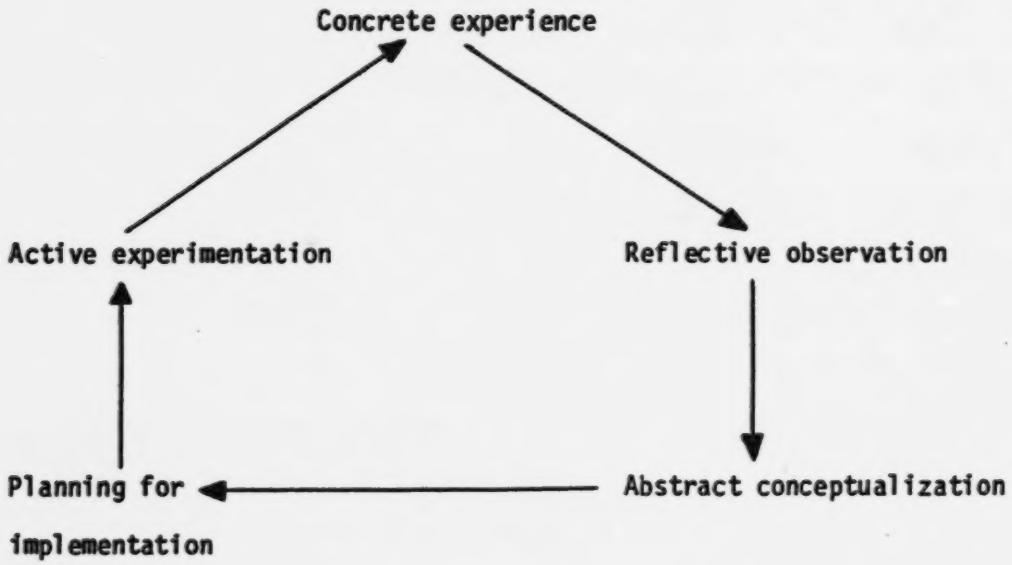

Figure 1. A model for reflective thought and action (adapted from experiential learning theory [Kolb, 1984]).

Concrete experience: A particular event, circumstance, or thought that someone has experienced. This is the data source upon which a person reflects. These events not only can be an individual's own personal experience but also can be situations experienced by other people that have been heard about, read about, or directly observed. Therefore, people can learn from their own actions and vicariously from what happens to others. The sources for these experiences can result from:

- Being observed or observing another person
- Reading case studies
- Performing in-basket activities
- Keeping a journal of personal experiences
- Recounting past events using stimulated recall exercises
- Engaging in role-play activities and simulations

Reflective observation: A form of questioning whereby non-judgmental information about a concrete experience is obtained. This reflective questioning allows a past event to be brought to a conscious level while refraining from making judgments as to the appropriateness of the action. Judgments and self-criticisms can impede the reflective process because more emphasis will be placed on solving the problem rather than understanding the situation; solutions evolve as a person enters the next two phases of the cycle. Typical questions asked during the reflective observation phase include:

- Who else was involved in the experience? Why?
- What feelings or attitudes accompanied the experience?
- Where and when did the experience occur?
- Was this experience unique or has it happened before?
- Why were certain actions undertaken during the experience?
- What were the consequences of the experience?

Abstract conceptualization: A particular generalization, concept, or model that helps to summarize the experience. These models are what Garman (1984) refers to as an "educational construal" because they allow people to organize their actions and meanings into an abbreviated, manageable form. Based on the answers to the questions posed during the reflective observation phase, people are better prepared to determine what

the experience has taught them. In this sense, self-generated frameworks for understanding the experience are created. These generalizations result as a person addresses several types of questions including:

- What have I learned as a result of this experience?
- Was there anything about this experience that was beyond my control?
- How can this experience explain other situations?

Besides generating their own models, people can use existing theories, principles, or constructs they are familiar with to examine and explain their experiences. For example, knowing something about the different types of activities associated with Sergiovanni's (1987) leadership forces (i.e., technical, human, educational, symbolic, and cultural) might help a principal better understand how he/she is or is not enacting these forces. In addition, knowing some basic principles of adult learning or student motivation might help explain certain events that are occurring in the school.

Planning for implementation: A plan of action for the future. This step is not specifically stated in Kolb's (1984) experiential learning cycle, but is important if people are going to be proactive and commit themselves to a future course of action. Without this step, people might not act upon any insights gained in the abstract conceptualization phase. Knowing something and doing something about it are two different things.

Any plan that is created needs to consider several features. At the very least, this plan should include:

- A rationale for undertaking the plan
- Specific activities that will occur
- Other people who will be involved
- A timeline of events and activities
- Types of data to be collected to determine how the plan is working

Active experimentation: The actual implementation of the action plan. An important part of this phase is the realization of the degree to which the plan is operating as expected. If certain types of information are collected as feedback (and as anticipated in the planning for implementation phase), a better understanding of the effects of the implementation will result. In this way, the active experimentation phase actually becomes another set of concrete experiences which begins the experiential learning cycle over again.

Uses of the Model During the Institute

This adapted model of Kolb's (1984) experiential learning theory, which highlights the central importance of reflective thinking, is used in several ways during the institute to stimulate reflection and to create a common language for participants as they process and record their experiences. As a practical tool, this model allows participants to reflect upon their past experiences as administrators as well as on the activities they are experiencing during the institute itself.

For example, the model is incorporated as participants write case records of events they have experienced as administrators. Examples of these case records are included in this publication. As can be plainly seen, the substance of these case records corresponds to the phases of the experiential learning model outlined above. For each case record prepared, participants briefly describe the event in the concrete experience section; list detailed information about the consequences of the event, their feelings about it, and reasons why certain actions were undertaken in the reflective observation section; indicate what they have learned as a result of the experience in the abstract conceptualization

section; and provide information about what they plan to do in the future under the planning for implementation section.

Furthermore, the framework is used as a mechanism for reflecting on the content presented in the institute. After each major presentation (a concrete experience), participants consider: (1) what new questions they might be able to ask about their schools as a result of the substance of the presentation (reflective observation), (2) what new concepts or ideas these questions might address (abstract conceptualization), and (3) how this information might be applied in their own settings (planning for implementation). Not only does this exercise allow participants to practice the phases of the reflective process, it also creates opportunities for them to determine the relevance of the presentation to their own particular circumstances.

In both instances, the use of this model stimulates reflection on action. Participants recall past experiences, either from their school settings or from the institute, ask themselves some critical questions about these events, determine the meaning of the events, and decide how this information can best be put to use in their own school settings in the future. Practicing reflection in this manner is crucial for professionals to become more cognizant of their own actions; future discussions with institute participants will determine whether this type of experience can aid school administrators in practicing the art of reflection in action.

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Case Title: Communicating With The Central Office
Case Record: A1
Case Code: 1.4.0

Concrete Experience

Dictates from our Director of Instruction come in the form of memos (as directives) with no opportunity to provide feedback. The Director will decide a particular program is right for the district without allowing personnel affected to provide input or to give it the stamp of approval.

Reflective Observation

1. Very little opportunity to provide feedback on new programs for the district.
2. Staff cannot contradict or offer difference of opinion.
3. Insufficient time to complete one program before we're expected to implement another.
4. Insufficient time at principal's meeting for sharing of concerns.
5. Agenda stacked with insignificant items thus avoiding real issues.

Abstract Conceptualization

1. I find myself implementing programs that I have very little knowledge of, but am expected to monitor.
2. I have to endorse new programs even though I know that the staff is already over extended.
3. I know the Director's intentions are good but has no tact in dealing with staff.
4. I have learned that outright confrontation with the Director will not work since it generates defensiveness.

Planning for Implementation

Possible Solutions:

1. Be more tolerant.
2. Speak to the Director on a one-to-one basis.
3. Refuse to implement unless given ample time to study, reflect on, and provide feedback. (oops, might be dangerous!)
4. Suggest that perhaps before implementing new programs principals be allowed the opportunity to list advantages/disadvantages.
5. Data Needed:
   a. Am I the only one feeling this pressure?
   b. Has it become a personal issue with me?
   c. Is this the Director's behavior or is this expected behavior in this district?
   d. How much support does the Director have in making these decisions?
   e. Is autocracy the Director's nature?

Case Title: School-Business Partnerships
Case Record: A2
Case Code: 3.3.1

Concrete Experience

A partnership was formed through my efforts between a local bank and the school.

Reflective Observation

The principal, School Improvement Team (SIT), the bank president, a shop teacher, and I were involved in establishing the partnership. SIT members were included to represent the faculty.

A plan for the partnership was brainstormed and outlined in August. Participants in the planning were enthusiastic, committed, concerned, and shared a sense of pride. A project was designed whereby the bank would recognize the school's "employee of the month".

To our loss, the bank shortly thereafter changed name, management, and foci. In effect the partnership was dissolved.

Abstract Conceptualization

1. Events occur affecting schools which are out of the control of school personnel.
2. I learned once again to re-group; what was accomplished was not lost.
3. Timing is an important ingredient in any venture.

Planning for Implementation

1. Re-establish contacts with the bank now that it has settled down.
2. Re-convene school and bank staff to develop a new plan for shared responsibilities and rewards.

Case Title: Communicating With Parents
Case Record: A3
Case Code: 3.4.0

Concrete Experience

During the fall Open House, part of the evening's activities was the showing of video taped portions of each of the school's classrooms.

Reflective Observation

Students, teachers and the principal were involved in the preparation of the tapes. The taping was a first, and was intended to "show case" the school. Teachers prepared prior to taping and both teachers and students were excited about the prospect.

At the Open House parents viewed the tapes and looked for their children. They seemed to enjoy the tape, and it seemed to promote interaction among parent, students and staff.

Abstract Conceptualization

The tapes were effective in communicating "school" to the parents in a non-threatening way. Open House was more of an event and children were pleased that their parents wanted to see them on tape. The total public viewing of the school indicated "openness" and demonstrated that the school was about **KIDS**. Finally, since all students were taped each student was presented as equal in value to any other student.

Planning for Implementation

Next Time:

1. Prepare more adequately.
2. Develop a tape theme.
3. Improve technical quality.
4. Observe parent behavior more carefully at next Open House.
5. Survey parents to obtain their reactions to taping and what the tape communicates about the school.

Case Title: Computer Purchase
Case Record: A4
Case Code: 4.1.0

Concrete Experience

The PTA has raised about $10,000 through a fund raiser to be used for computer purchases. My job is to coordinate the "decision-making" process on how best to use the money.

Reflective Observation

I sent three teachers to look at two lab situations - IBM Writing to Read, and 18-20 Tandy computers with a "server" at another school.

I consulted with the District's computer specialist.

I conducted a needs assessment with all teachers and five parents from each class.

I scheduled a meeting with the PTA Board, the three teachers on the Computer Committee, the district's computer specialist, and representatives from IBM and Tandy to discuss possibilities. The decision was made to locate computers in a "lab" with one teacher each from the primary and secondary grades.

Abstract Conceptualization

I should have selected software first.

I need to be more specific with committee about their role. Use **their** time and expertise in obtaining sample software.

I should see who has good computer labs in surrounding districts.

Planning for Implementation

1. Locate good resource for software.
2. Assign committee to check with schools currently using computer labs for recommendations on software.
3. With staff input, decide "emphasis" for grade levels.
4. With committee (staff input) meet by primary and intermediate blocks to determine **who** will work in lab. Departmentalization needed to accomplish above.
5. After determining basic software needed, and cost of it, decide with committee and PTA Board which hardware to purchase with remaining funds.
6. Plan "layout" for lab - with existing "furniture".
7. Implement Computer Lab beginning of second semester.

Case Title: Developing Administrator Credibility
Case Record: A5
Case Code: 5.1.0

Concrete Experience

As a first year assistant principal in one of the district's largest elementary schools, one of my first objectives was to develop personal credibility with the staff. As a teacher I had had success dealing with parents and students, but staff saw me as "green" and inexperienced.

Reflective Observation

I came into the assistant principalship right out of the classroom. I felt fresh, energetic and important. I wanted to make a good impression, so I dressed sharply and put on my best "administrative" face. I felt great!

My first inkling of thins not being all roses came toward the end of the year when a teacher came to me and said that they, the staff, supported me. This statement caused me to wonder why I needed support. I thought that things were going ok with the staff. Now I began to question how I was being perceived by the staff members.

Abstract Conceptualization

Some staff dynamics are beyond administrative control. A large, skilled, experienced staff has opinions; cliques form.

People have needs which have to be addressed. It takes a keen sense to read people (including their hidden agendas) to know and understand their needs. Credibility is developed through reflection, developing social skills, self-confidence, consistency and an "open ear". One has to be familiar with the latest research and have a well-focused vision which can be effectively shared with the staff so they can participate in it as owners and co-creators.

Planning for Implementation

1. Provide inservice sessions which are productive and interesting. (I need to do my homework)
2. Facilitate and support the professional and personal growth of staff members through informal visitations, providing release time, demonstration lessons, research findings, etc.
3. Be visible and available.
4. Attend all school functions to show my support and appreciation.
5. Communicate my thanks and appreciation every time it is warranted so the staff knows that I know that they are doing a good job.
6. Be fair and equitable to all the staff members.
7. Seek and use staff input so they feel ownership and responsibility for the success of our school.

Case Title: Supervising Non-certified Staff
Case Record: A6
Case Code: 6.3.0

Concrete Experience

A non-certified library aide with 18 years experience consistently creates conflict from a base of informal social power within the school.

Reflective Observation

Several factors bond the group led by the non-certified aide:

1. All are non-certified.
2. All speak a second language which enables them to converse privately.
3. All express dis-satisfaction with their current situations.
4. All have social roots of long standing.
5. All exhibit vindictiveness. (Jealous of certified staff members?)
6. All project the sense of being treated as second class citizens.
7. All bring past experiences and grievances into play.
8. Their feelings are consistent.
9. None will face conflict directly.
10. All participate in well above average very vindictive, harmful gossip.
11. Members develop and implement plans to "get back at" certified staff members.
12. Conflicts stated in "we" and "them" terms rather than on individual bases.
13. Participants feel insecure.

Participants consistently affect the school climate and effectiveness of the organization. A large majority, if not all of the staff, is "afraid" of bringing down the wrath of the group and especially the librarian.

In order to promote a more positive atmosphere we have watched and listened to positive attitudes tapes. We have increased the number of staff social affairs, and program improvements have been suggested and methods for facilitating improvements discussed. The attitude of the librarian is positive in my presence but feedback indicates it is negative in my absence.

Abstract Conceptualization

1. Non-certified staff members are probably less dedicated than desirable.
2. Non-certified positions are less rewarding in all areas.
3. Non-certified positions lead to rapid plateauing.
4. The librarian's current situation indicates possible life as well as job plateauing.
5. The librarian's character indicates need for dominance.
6. The librarian could be threatened by the success of others.
7. The effectiveness of the entire school is the main goal.
8. Employer-employee responsibilities are two-way.

9. The organization has deemed the librarian's behavior acceptable for close to 20 years!
10. As job requirements change in an organization the employee may not be capable of maintaining competency.
11. More secure staff members may be willing to overcompensate in a conflict.

Planning for Implementation

1. We must improve the situation if the school is to increase efficiency.
2. The staff member may never reach the desired attitude or performance level.
3. Any growth is an improvement.
4. There is a minimally acceptable level below which behavior cannot be tolerated.
5. The favored solution may be the retirement of the employee.
6. Rapport with staff members is a part of each employee's evaluation.
7. Library competencies have been mandated by the State Department of Education, thus increasing the librarians job requirements.
8. Non-certified personnel are "at-will" employees.

Planning for Implementation

1. In September all non-certified staff members will be put on growth plans even though this is not normal procedure.
2. A list of job descriptions will be presented and expectations specified in writing. It will be explained that consequences for lack of improvement could be as severe as non-recommendation for re-hiring.
3. Growth areas will include staff rapport and instructional support.
4. Close supervision will be maintained with frequent observations. Negative rumors and conflict will be acted upon immediately.
5. Periodic in-services will be provided utilizing relevant videos and cassettes from the district's professional library.
6. Positive reinforcement for any desired behavior will be provided.
7. Direct communications will be increased.
8. An instructional assistant will be added to the school improvement committee.
9. Informal as well as formal means will be used to assess results.

Case Title: Enhancing Staff Collegiality
Case Record: A7
Case Code: 7.1.0

Concrete Experience

The teachers expressed a need for on-the-job opportunities to interact socially and professionally to share ideas, teaching methods, strategies, instructional objectives, etc. in an informal and relaxing environment that was conducive to open communication.

Reflective Observation

The people involved in this experience wanted to bridge the gap which isolated them from their peers. They desired to be closer together in a more sharing, caring and harmonious relationship.

A factor which contributed to this need was the desire of new and old staff to know each other better and be accepted on a reciprocal basis.

Abstract Conceptualization

As a result of this experience, I have been able to reaffirm the fact that in order to have happy students we need to have happy teachers.

The teachers involved were sincere and dedicated to their jobs and the establishment of esprit de corps.

Planning for Implementation

1. Teachers were assigned to prepare project reports and present the highlights of their programs at regular (monthly) staff meetings. The assigned teacher were also responsible for hosting the staff meeting in their classrooms and providing refreshments.
2. A coke machine was installed in the teachers' lounge to raise money for refreshments at staff meetings, a Christmas dinner, and an end-of-the year staff picnic.
3. Doughnuts, coffee, pastries, and other goodies were also provided for teachers to eat during their break time or from 8:00-8:30AM before classes started. A new coffee pot was bought with coke machine money.
4. Topics for project reports included: 1. What am I most proud of in my classroom ? 2. What am I most proud of my students? 3. What lesson plan, teaching/learning activity have I had real success with? 4. What am I most proud of in the school or the school district? 5. What problems do I see in my classroom or in the school? 6. What solutions are available?

Case Title: Staff Interaction Meetings
Case Record: A8
Case Code: 7.1.0

Concrete Experience

I initiated an activity whereby the total staff could get together and interact around concerns, questions, and activities. Time was dedicated to this activity and could not be taken away for anythingelse. The staff did not have to guard what was said and did not have to fear reprisal.

Reflective Observation

The total staff was involved. It appeared that previously there was never a time and/or opportunity for staff to get together and collectively problem solve or to talk or share ideas and/or experiences and concerns.

Initially there was staff mistrust because this was new and initiated by the principal. Staff feared that it was a way for me to gather data and use it in a retaliatory manner later.

Brainstorming was used to generate topics, and time was set aside to focus on problems/concerns that arose. Facilitators were trained to conduct the meetings, and a recorder was always present. Action suggestions were always assigned to someone as a responsibility.

Abstract Conceptualization

I learned:

1. Most people are conscientious, caring, sensitive.
2. Some interact negatively because of their prior experiences.
3. All ideas are valued.
4. Everyone appreciates honesty.
5. Affirmation and validation yields increased productivity.
6. Collaborative decision making and shared responsibility decreases negativism.
7. Everyone listens.
8. Learning about others in different ways leads to increased respect.

Planning for Implementation

Initially the staff appeared not to value each other, students or administration; mistrust and negativism permeated everything. There was inaction. I was new, a female, and black--all fear generating. My predecessor was very authoritarian. The staff did as it was told; thought and creativity was not allowed.

Thus I instituted weekly staff meetings as a mechanism for change. As facilitators were trained I planned to take a less active leadership role and a more active group role.

Program evaluation would be deferred until the end of the year, and the group would decide whether to continue, revamp, or discontinue. Similarly the group would decide upon action plans, meeting locations, refreshments, and the like.

Case Title: Enhancing Staff Collegiality
Case Record: A9
Case Code: 7.1.0

Concrete Experience

I held a weekly staff meeting at 7:45 a.m. every Tuesday with the goal of establishing collegiality among staff.

Reflective Observation

1. Those involved were all certified and non-certified teaching staff.
2. Initial feelings were, "Oh no, another meeting", bust as the year progressed attitudes became very positive.
3. Agenda and discussion items differed every week.
4. Teachers, at first, did not participate, but as the year progressed and trust was built more teacher participation occurred.
5. Consequences included staff participation in various governance activities and discussion of educational activities, theories, ideas, etc.

Abstract Conceptualization

1. I learned that things take time and there is a process that people must go through to reach a "trust" level before being willing to stick their necks out and discuss certain topics.
2. On occasion teachers or other staff would bring up topics that were uncomfortable or out of my or their control but we would discuss these. Often these topics would carry over to another meeting when they could be discussed more thoroughly.

Planning for Implementation

1. During the '89-'89 school year I would like to continue with the weekly meetings, utilizing the teachers to generate agenda items. Also I'd like to meet in different classrooms every week and allow the classroom teachers some "show & tell" time to brag about positive things going on in their classrooms.
2. During other times during the year, I intend to bring in speakers on topics identified by the staff to keep our knowledge current and give us all a common knowledge base from which to operate.

Case Title: Organizing a Student Council
Case Record: A10
Case Code: 7.2.0

Concrete Experience

The school staff organized a student council for the purpose of providing opportunities for student input to the decision making process.

Reflective Observation

From a needs assessment administered to staff, students and parents, students identified an area that needed improvement, namely, their ability to influence decisions within the school. In discussions that followed teachers shared how they did and didn't allow student input, and it was a group decision to form a student council. Two co-sponsors volunteered and meeting times were determined. Selection of membership followed. Early on the group struggled with organizational rules, purpose, methods of reporting back to classes, etc., all of which entailed careful planning. Training of members and agreeing on appropriate topics for the council's consideration were difficult and challenging tasks. Students and sponsors experienced frustration throughout the process.

Abstract Conceptualization

Organizing the student council, training members and choosing appropriate topics were far more complex issues than expected. Good published training materials were limited and children's ideas needed monitoring and guidance. Support from other students and from some teachers was not always there when needed. Although the student council sponsored many popular events and activities, a year-end review of its accomplishments made us aware that the original desire to have more opportunities for student input into decision making had not been achieved to our satisfaction.

Planning for Implementation

After reviewing the purpose and accomplishments of our student council we decided to do further planning with staff and students before undertaking next year's program. We felt we needed once again to define membership (which grades should be allowed to participate), determine better meeting times, solicit improved support and most of all, explore ideas for alternative means of obtaining student input into the decision making process.

Case Title: Staff Participation in Grouping Students (Special Education)
Case Record: All
Case Code: 7.2.0

Concrete Experience

As the school administrator I sought and facilitated active staff participation in formulating twelve classroom groups of multiply handicapped special education students.

Reflective Observation

1. Who - Administrator, Special Education Teachers, Nurse, Counselor, Ancillary Staff (OT, PT, SLP).
2. a. What - Administrator called meetings (early April) of all Sp. Ed. certified staff and support personnel to provide direction for process of formulating class groups. Teachers were given cards to complete on each student currently in their class describing students needs, levels of functioning and recommendations for the school year. Cards were completed and returned to administrator.
   b. (2nd week in April Meeting) - Mission for participants was to collaboratively place students in twelve groups on basis of students needs and focus of instruction. Dynamics of groupings were considered. No specific teachers associated with groups.
   c. Next day. Administrator provided each participant with typed groupings arrived at during previous meeting. Attachment encouraged input (in writing) from each participant regarding suggested changes and rationale for each change. Form to be returned to administrator in 3 days.
   d. 3rd week. Friday breakfast meeting held off campus (group consensus had been obtained to hold meeting in this manner). Administrator presented revised groupings which had been compiled as a result on input survey recommendations. Again no teacher's name was attached to any group.
   e. 4th week. Groupings were finalized. Administrator began meeting individually with teachers to assign class groups to specific teachers. All classroom assignments were made by the second week in May.
3. Feelings and Emotions: Initially a range of emotions was exhibited by participants from enthusiasm to fear, hostility and mistrust. Some teachers were quite protective of their students. Other teachers and therapists viewed the process as token involvement. At the end of the total experience, satisfaction was verbalized and/or observed from all participants. Many positive comments were directed to the

administrator for the opportunity to "really be involved" and the good programs that could be developed for students in each grouping. This administrator felt frustrated at times but overall the emotions were positive and the product was great.

Abstract Conceptualization

1. As an administrator I learned that staff involvement in formulating class groups created groupings which were balanced and instructionally sound.
2. By initially eliminating teachers' names from groups, I learned that there was more of a vested interest on the part of all participants to look objectively at student placements.
3. I also learned that, although the process was long and at times involved, it was productive and positive.

Planning for Implementation

Since this was a "successful experience" I would tend to follow the timelines indicated in the Reflective Observation section. Staff and/or student changes would require an assessment in mid-September as to the appropriateness of student placement. This would be accomplished during classroom visits and meetings with the Educational Team for each classroom (teacher, therapists, nurse, etc.). Adjustments in the process would be made if necessary as indicated by these observations and meetings.

Case Title: Selecting School Colors and Logo
Case Record: A12
Case Code: 7.3.1

Concrete Experience

One of the tasks associated with the opening of the new high school was selecting school colors and a school logo. Both political and public relations issues were involved. The goal was to develop a process through which students and community would feel positive about the new school and claim ownership.

Reflective Observation

1. Students were involved in this process.
2. Positive feelings emerged, but many students still feel loyalty to their previous schools.
3. The experience is unique. (New high schools don't open that often!)
4. Certain actions were taken because we had to persuade students to become involved with the new high school. Involvement is part of ownership and pride.
5. The outcomes of the process were very positive. Students are proud to be the first at a new high school and to establish traditions. The community has developed positive relations with the new high school.

Abstract Conceptualization

1. I have learned that such processes can be a public relations bonanza.
2. The only constraint was the availability of logos and school color combinations. We didn't want to match other nearby schools.
3. This experience was a motivational tool for students and community.

Planning for Implementation

1. Show color combinations and logos to students after survey of color combinations is done.
2. Have samples and show them to small student groups at each feeder school.
3. Narrow choices and have students vote.
4. Publicize results for good public relations.
5. Utilize student committees.
6. Consider:
   A. Other school districts' colors and logos.
   B. Commercial availability.
   C. Cost and delivery time to school, etc.
   D. Student choice.

Cast Title: Student Placement
Case Record: A13
Case Code: 8.1.1

Concrete Experience

Two students (twin boys, premies) registered for 2nd grade in our school. After 2 weeks in 2nd grade, both teachers indicated that both children were very frustrated, even in tears, because they couldn't do the work. Our Chapter I teacher tested them, and both of them tested on the pre-primer level. We called a conference with both parents, both teachers, and the Chapter I teacher. The parents were very resistant to letting us place them in first, but the next day I did so anyway thinking the children would feel comfortable and successful there.

Reflective Observation

The twins were frustrated, actually working at pre-primer level, but placed in 2nd grade.

The former teachers at another school prepared me for a negative parent reaction: They tried to retain them the year before and in kindergarten.

Parents were informed in many ways, on the fact that the children were in the wrong grade and age group. If the mother had carried them full term, they would have been in the younger class.

After the parent-teacher conference, the parents discussed the matter with the twins. The next day one cried in the classroom because he was afraid they were going to have to move to another school. He also said, "Mom was crying when she told us we might have to go to 1st grade". I talked the boys into trying 1st grade for the day which compounded the problem because "Dad will be mad," they said. The parents did get quite angry and took the boys to their neighboring public school where they can receive Chapter I services, and demanded a tuition refund.

We have a no-refund policy regarding all fees including tuition. The parents demanded their money be returned except for the 13 days the students were in school. I consulted an attorney and he recommended that we return the money since we have no "placement policy" or statement on the registration form which, in court, would serve as the parents' contract. I refunded the money.

Abstract Conceptualization

Parents need much education about their parenting roles.

We need to look at all forms in legal terms, and try to foresee areas or loopholes that would not hold up in court, particularly the registration form that seemingly functions as a contract. I need to include a line that states our policy of placing children where they can function best, after consultation with parents.

Sometimes parents really "tie our hands" in dealing with their children.

Planning for Implementation

1. I plan to institute more parenting programs for our parents.
2. Revise our registration form.
3. Lead the school board in re-evaluating our no-refund policy.

Case Title: Changing Student Attitudes
Case Record: A14
Case Code: 8.3.2

Concrete Experience

Very prevalent in my school is the "Westsider" mentality, i.e., low regard for education. Students feel that they must maintain this "Westsider" image.

Reflective Observation

1. Low test scores (some of the lowest in the district).
2. Low teacher morale.
3. High turnover among principals (six in six years).
4. Very low expectations for students.
5. Much parent/student/teacher turmoil the year prior to my coming.
6. Lack of a sense of competiveness.
7. Lack of pride in the school
8. Very little opportunity allowed for sharing of accomplishments.
9. A fragmented staff.

Abstract Conceptualization

I soon realized that if I was to make a difference it would mean moving staff from a negative and apathetic mode to one of optimism. I suspected that if we were going to make an impact on student behaviors I would need to begin with working on attitudes towards their work place and respect for children. I began by instituting an open door policy, providing opportunities and avenues for teachers to communicate. Realistically, all I did the first year was to attempt to heal old wounds without being overly anxious or attempting to make rapid changes.

Planning for Implementation

1. Setting up support groups for potential student dropouts.
2. Initiating small group discussion with students on the positive things happening and attempting to determine the reasons for success.
3. Insuring that our school was represented in academic and athletic activities.
4. Initiating honor and recognition assemblies.
5. Holding rap sessions with teachers by grade level or topic of interest.
6. Having coffee and donuts once a week to bring staff together.
7. Recognizing differences of opinion.

Case Title: Teacher Inter-visitation
Case Record: A15
Case Code: 9.3.0

Concrete Experience

Arrangements were made for the kindergarten teachers to visit first grade classrooms and for first grade teachers to visit kindergarten classrooms. The goal was to open lines of communication between the two grade levels.

Reflective Observation

The kindergarten curriculum had been well planned and well coordinated because the staff worked closely together to establish goals and expected competencies. Communication among kindergarten teachers was extensive, but not much communication took place between grade levels.

Several positive outcomes of the inter-visitation program were achieved. First, the kindergarten teachers were pleased to see their students from the previous year and enjoyed seeing how they had matured and how they were functioning in the first grade. They were observant of how the children are treated in first grade and what is expected of them in terms of independence and productivity.

Similarly, first grade teachers observed that kindergarten teachers didn't just "play all day" and hopefully, they observed that the "fun things" planned for children were really carefully planned learning activities. Many first grade teachers left with new respect for the kindergarten staff and a better understanding of kindergarten age children and their needs and abilities.

Most teachers were pleased to have this chance to do something they thought would help children and the school program. They enjoyed and appreciated the opportunity.

Abstract Conceptualization

I believe that "walking in other people's shoes" is a good way to create understanding of a situation. The inter-visitation program provided such an opportunity for kindergarten and first grade teachers.

Planning and Implementation

I would like to take the teacher inter-visitation programs one step forward during 1988-89. This time I would like to have teachers choose "partner" first grade teachers and exchange classrooms for the day.

I would like this to occur early in the first semester while the kindergarten students are still very "new" at school.

After the visit, teachers will get together for a social gathering and discuss how their day went. They should have some time for sharing observations, feelings and suggestions. I will also provide a questionnaire for written comments. These survey sheets and shared comments will be evaluated to determine the success of the project.

Case Title: Teacher In-service
Case Record: A16
Case Code: 9.6.0

Concrete Experience

A group of teachers expressed the desire to go beyond the basic principles and procedures of the Assertive Discipline Plan: they felt that they needed a consultant to assist them. Subsequently, I worked more than a month to get consultant money from the district.

Reflective Observation

1. Specific information about the planned inservice program had not been obtained from the teachers before the plea to the District for money.
2. The teachers had not thought through what they wanted to accomplish with a consultant's help.
3. Individual teachers in this group were very successful in implementing "Assertive Discipline" in their classrooms.
4. In requesting a consultant, could they have meant something other than what they said?
5. Was there a better way for me to assist them?

Abstract Conceptualization

Accepting the research that indicated that self-planned professional growth promotes greater satisfaction and more of a commitment, my attempt to assist a group of teachers was spontaneous rather than well-planned. The ability to switch hats to the facilitator role would have resulted in better planning for a successful inservice.

Planning for Implementation

1. Listen carefully to requests.
2. Ask appropriate questions for background, future goals, etc.
3. Determine what is to be learned a how it will be used.
4. Determine with the groups what resources are needed and how they will be used.
5. Ask the group to work directly with the appropriate committee for planning and resources. The committee has knowledge of district resources at minimal or nominal cost.
6. Write an appropriate plan including answers to the above and appropriate target date for implementation, number of participants, etc. Submit the information to the staff development committee.

Case Title: Teacher In-service
Case Record: A17
Case Code: 9.6.0

Concrete Experience

I presented an in-service session dealing with improving the effectiveness of committees and task forces.

Reflective Observation

The session was conducted during the regular Wednesday afternoon in-service in the school library. The whole staff (certified/classified) were involved but as a "captive audience". The topic had not been requested by the staff but included a variety of "boundary breaking" activities designed to be fun, involve the total group, and take place in a non-threatening atmosphere. The session was well-planned if not in my particular area of expertise. However, the session produced resistance, confusion and negative comments.

Abstract Conceptualization

I should have waited to present this topic until it was expressed as a need by the staff. I was, perhaps, not the only one who recognized the need, but certainly one of few. Perhaps the resistance to me as new administrator prevented their acceptance of my presentation. I think they thought I was criticizing their previous efforts and forcing something on them. I recognize that I feel I must do everything myself and be all things to all people. However, ownership must be felt by participants in all situations if success is to be achieved.

Planning for Implementation

1. Generate a list of needs/concerns/issues from School Improvement Team and/or total staff.
2. Determine appropriate methods for addressing list generated.
3. Assign task force to each prioritized issue. Attempt to get volunteers. Through the task force process the need may arise for clarifying the task force process!
4. Brainstorm task force effectiveness and secure suggestions for follow-up.

Case Title: Teacher Plateauing
Case Record: A18
Case Code: 9.6.1

Concrete Experience

A young, female teacher (7 years experience; 3rd year in this district and school) in my school was very depressed and unhappy with her group of 18 first graders and negative about everything in and at the school. Last year she was very excited about her class and generally was a positive person and superior teacher.

Reflective Observation

The teacher was obviously troubled. She was doing fewer creative exercises in class and more rote learning and much more scolding. She had a low-average group of students. Three of the students spent between 1-2 hours a day in special ed for reading. She had three reading groups, was implementing a new math program for which she was on the planning committee and she was teaming with the other two first grade teachers in science, health and social studies. Her students had four 45 minutes specials a week during which she had personal planning time.

The teacher shared her feelings of frustration with me. We discussed possible at home causes (none) and school causes (vague) and possible medical causes (ruled out by a physical). She continued to spend part of every day in tears.

Three parents complained about the teacher (she was too harsh and not positive enough). All three expressed awareness of her general unhappiness.

The teacher talked openly of her problems with other staff members with other staff members and me. She was aware that I monitored her interpersonal relations with the students. She talked to me and other teaching colleagues about discipline management plans.

Abstract Conceptualization

Since this is a recurring condition, the "plateauing" concept may offer a viable approach to the problem.

Planning for Implementation

1. The teacher and I talked about her value to the school and the relationship between her work and her feeling of self-esteem.
2. We clarified several paths she might choose to alleviate present problems.
3. We talked about present choices (not too many) and future choices and what some of her preferences for the future might be.

4. Coworkers have provided support but are encouraged not to be crutches.
5. In the next evaluation conference we will discuss some career planning and how she might build rejuvenation into her year's plans.
6. She will be referred to the Personnel Director and or district EAP team if severity of problem continues.

Case Title: Teacher Plateauing
Case Record: A19
Case Code: 9.6.1
Rationale: Principals and teachers need the opportunity to experience a new challenge periodically because new challenges increase performance.

Concrete Experience

Culture: Teachers (average years of experience=15) who do not enjoy what they are doing.

Architecture of Task:
A. Same subject
B. Same grade level
C. Similar challenges year after year.
D. Same building
E. Same people

Reflective Observation

One of the challenges an administrator faces is to help those teachers who are effective and are hard working but are beginning to experience disenchantment with students, school land education.

There is nothing so unequal as the equal treatment of unequals.

Abstract Conceptualization

Change is rejuvenating to teachers. Only four percent of the teacher population fears change. The real winners are students because they are being taught by teachers who are motivated.

Planning for Implementation

Phase I: provide in-service for administrators and school board on plateauing.

Phase II: provide in-service for teachers and community.

Phase III: Establish committees for studying the problem and providing input on best way to implement "change for motivation; motivation for change".

Phase IV: Present plan: rotate teachers among grade levels and buildings.

Time line: one year for in-service and preparation.

Case Title: Teacher Supervision
Case Record: A20
Case Code: 9.7.0

Concrete Experience

One of the most positive learning experiences I've been involved in was a result of what I thought would be a negative and painful intervention with an experienced but poorly performing teacher.

Reflective Observation

I supervised the teacher throughout the school year and observed a fairly rapid deterioration, especially in the spring. There seemed to be no planning and very little actual teaching. I knew he was also experiencing serious family problems and health problems. He had been teaching about 20 years and, while never a "ball of fire", he had provided a satisfactory program for students. We had talked fairly frankly about home and work and he was aware of a need to improve but clearly lacked direction.

During the first week of the following year I gave him written notice of need to improve in specific areas, particularly planning. The "contract" included: (1) weekly lesson plans given to me by Friday afternoon; (2) weekly meetings between us at 8:00AM Monday morning to review the previous week's and the new week's plans; (3) weekly lessons to be on the board by the beginning of class on Monday; (4) 2-3 visits for week by me to monitor adherence to plans.

Abstract Conceptualization

Motivation to improve certainly comes from the fear of losing one's job, but, I believe, it comes even more from the feeling that one is important and valued and that comes from among other sources the administrator's time commitment. This plan took $2\text{-}2^{1}/_{2}$ hours a week of my time for <u>one</u> teacher but was worth it to save a job and improve job performance.

Planning for Implementation

Every year there's someone (or two) who need to make drastic improvement. No matter what the specific deficiency, I believe it is the administrator's monitoring and commitment that can provide the necessary motivation for the employee.

The success of this plan is easy to evaluate--for the administrator, the time spent can be tallied, and for the teacher, the evaluation is built into the "plan" and can be rated as successful or not. In this specific instance a big reward for me was when the teacher not only did exactly as asked but also thanked me for helping. He said he knew he was "slacking off" but didn't know what to do to get back on track.

Concrete Experience

I moved a kindergarten teacher into an upper grade at her request. She said she was experiencing burnout and need a change of assignment. She had been very successful at the kindergarten level and many parents requested her for their children.

During the Fall, I had several short duration walk-throughs of her classroom and did not detect any significant problems. However, early in the Spring I did a full observation and I was shocked to see the problems which existed within the classroom. I did three more observations before finalizing my evaluation.

Reflective Observation

After the initial long observation I had two pages of front/back scripting which reflected poor student behavior, in-attention, poor behavior management and a lack of pupil respect for the teacher and other students. Little academic activity was taking place outside the immediate area near the teacher - arm's length. The classroom was self contained and organized in centers. The teacher was frustrated; children, as mentioned, were disrespectful; and I was upset with myself, as well as with the students and teacher. I felt partially responsible as I did not conduct more thorough observations early in the school year. The experience was unique. During the following days, I conducted additional observations to see if my original data was accurate. It was! I began corrective action immediately by conferencing with the teacher and being honest with her about what I'd observed. She initially denied being aware of any classroom misbehavior. This appeared to be "avoidance". The next day we met again. She "confessed" she was having problems of control, but based upon her "twelve years of experience" thought it would get better. She thanked me for being a friend and being honest and asked for help. I had promised her assistance during the first conference and indicated I wouldn't leave her alone to solve her problems. I apologized for not catching it sooner. She admitted her ego prevented her from asking for help earlier. (She has been a curriculum leader in the school.) I met with her and her students to help her set expectations/consequences. I also provided her literature, the freedom to observe and attend workshops, and the opportunity to visit other teachers and classrooms.

Abstract Conceptualization

Any change in teaching assignment deserves close monitoring. Do not take previous success at one grade level to automatically carry over to another.

Planning for Implementation

I will do more lengthy evaluations early for any staff member reassigned.

Case Title: Adding Curricular Spice
Case Record: A22
Case Code: 10.0.0

Concrete Experience

I organized staff and students into cross-grade groups for one hour enrichment activities on three consecutive Friday afternoons.

Reflective Observation

1. All staff and students were involved as well as some parents.
2. There was a great deal of positive interaction between students and teachers who ordinarily did not associate with each other.
3. Groups were well organized, but expectations were not clear to all.
4. Scheduling was a concern tc some who wanted to have a shorter session later in the day.
5. Some of the "wild kid" syndrome was apparent at recess following the session.
6. My absence during the last session was ill advised.

Abstract Conceptualization

1. I need to set very clear expectations for staff "volunteering".
2. Time frames must be specified clearly.
3. Allowing several staff members to work together created some confusion which could have been avoided.
4. Misunderstandings run rampant when things are not made very specific.
5. Even if not everyone is thrilled with an experiment, I need to stand firm if I am convinced it's good for students.
6. Principal needs to be free to monitor activity rather than being identified as course instructor.

Planning for Implementation

Rationale: Education, like life, needs some "spice" if it is to be exciting, interesting, and fun! Learning can occur in alternate ways when students are allowed to be involved in cross-grade activities where cooperative working occurs.

Activities:

1. Staff and parents list courses they are willing to teach, specify which grade levels are to be included, identify the materials and space needed, and indicate whether they prefer 3 sessions with the same students or different students each time.
2. List of available courses compiled by grade levels with choice form for students allowing 3 choices.
3. Have staff input by Sept. 30 with student choices tallied by Oct. 12. Courses begin after Teachers Convention. Repeat activity mid Jan. to late Feb.
4. Follow sessions with student and staff evaluations.

Case Title: Renaming a Special Education Program
Case Record: A23
Case Code: 10.0.0

Concrete Experience

Early last year we adopted a new name, ACES (Alternative Curriculum for Exceptional Students), for our special education program.

Reflective observation

Special education students, regular education students, teachers, administrators, and community members were involved in the change. This was a unique experience for the district, but it was felt that since all groups were involved in the special education programs in one way or another they should be represented.

The action to change the name was undertaken because a good deal of negativism surrounded special education programs. It was often difficult for parents and students to accept placement in them. We wished to promote a more positive image of special education and enhance the self-image of parents and students enrolled in special education programs.

The consequences have been profound. Students and parents are more accepting of placement, self-esteem and risen, and there is less student-student wariness towards enrollment in ACES.

Abstract Conceptualization

I learned that a minor thing like a name change can change attitudes and preconceived notions.

Planning for Implementation

1. In future image enhancing attempts, actively seek more input from community, staff, and parents.
2. Explain in greater detail the need for creating a more positive image.
3. Collect more data on why students, parents, etc. feel the way they do about certain programs.